

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

Saturday, March 8, 2014, 9:30 a.m.
San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Ave. Ste. 310, San Diego, CA 92123

Meeting held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park (VMMC)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ben Dillingham III; Nancy Owen; Mary Beth Newton; John Weaver; Laurie Martell; Tom Splitgerber; Justin Singer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Terry Jensen; Will Rodriguez; Michael Robledo

OTHERS PRESENT

Steve Arends, UVC; Neil Asper, Chula Vista Veterans Home; Don Newton, SD MOAA; Evan Bollinger, Supervisor Dave Roberts office.

1. Call to Order

Mary Beth Newton Chair, called the VAC meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions/Public Input (3 minutes)

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made and seconded to approve prior meeting minutes.

5. Chairman's Remarks

Mary Beth Newton reminded everyone to finish the Ethics training if need to and send the certificate in to Susie Dusso, Secretary.

Legislative:

Mary Beth passed out Steve Arends Legislative Report from the UVC meeting she attended (Attachment A).

Evan Bollinger spoke about the Military Transition Support Project supported by Supervisor Dave Roberts and wanted VAC's opinion on Proposition 41 (AB-635), conversion of home loan funds to multifamily units for veterans.

Also, his office is planning a veterans networking event to be held possibly in June.

A consensus was made for VAC to support AB-635

One VA

Steve Arends announced Ron Stark is the new Co-Chair of One VA, and is Joe Brunner's successor.

Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)

Neil Asper updated on the Serenity Court yard; there are architectural plans for that. Later they will work on funding.

Donald Veverka is the new administrator in Yountville. He has about 30 years of experience. Redding just passed its recognition survey with the VA. No administrator there yet. Fresno and west LA are coming along well.

Steve reminded about the Chula Vista Veterans Home 14th Annual Golf Classic on Thursday May 8, 2014 at Eastlake Country Club.

United Veterans Council (UVC)

Mary Beth attended the last meeting and spoke about the VAC initiative to send letters to all the Mayors of the various San Diego County cities requesting information on their Veterans Hiring Policy. Once results are received a report will be prepared for the Board of Supervisors.

Veterans Week and Veterans Day Parade

Mary Beth spoke about an invitation Jack Harkins sent out via email regarding a birthday honors celebration reception for General Bob Cardenas', (Air Force retired) 94th birthday. It will be held at the Veterans Museum on Friday March 14th from 3pm to 6pm.

County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)

Tom Splitgerber spoke about a San Diego County event "Serving Those Who Served" which supports mental health awareness and stigma elimination in San Diego's military community held at the Air & Space Museum last Tuesday. More than 200 veterans, active duty and their families attended. There were mental health advocates and a panel of veterans and mental health experts.

Tom met with Nick Macchione and Bill York concerning the San Diego Veterans Coalition.

Tom spoke about 2 currently proposed bills:

- AB-2703 CVSO funding bill- San Diego County is supporting it.
- AB-1637 Drivers licenses: veteran designation. The veteran would check off if they are a veteran on their application and their license would show that designation
- SDCVSO plate will be available in June.

VAC passed a motion to support having a County Veterans Summit, all ayes, no nays.

Community Reports

Nancy requested an update on the VA Work Study Program. Steve said it passed the House and it is up to the US Senate to re-authorize the program.

Mary Beth Newton spoke about the Military Transition Support Project. This is potentially going to become a national model for how to welcome home those who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan by catching and helping service members still in uniform going through their transition assistance programs.

Unfinished Business

Veterans Hiring Policy; several responses received from the follow up letters. 11 out of 18 letters have been received to date. Mary Beth suggested waiting until next meeting; bring

your recommendations so the report can be put together for the Board of Supervisors.

Bylaws were discussed regarding the vacancy for the ex-officio member, Commander Navy Region Southwest or a designated representative.

Mary Beth will draft a letter to Admiral Lorge, Commander Navy Region Southwest requesting his support to fill the currently vacant seat on the VAC.

8. New Business

No new business

9. Closing Remarks

No.

10. Meeting Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.